

BOYS IN THE HOODS

Neo-Nazis in Toronto



Throughout the past decade, fascist movements have been growing bolder throughout Europe and North America.

Fascists organize against self-determination for First Nations people in the Americas and against the human rights of people of colour.

They campaign to end immigration from Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Africa, and against employment equity. They promote the extermination of lesbians and gays and Jewish people, and would deny all women's reproductive freedoms. Virulently

anti-communist and anti-Semitic, they reduce all human rights struggles to communist agitation or a Jewish conspiracy to control the world. With the hope of committing a full-scale Holocaust again, they perpetuate the genocidal lie that the Nazi Holocaust did not

happen in order to make fascism more acceptable to more mainstream bigots.

In short, in their drive for power, fascists play on every hope, fear, and insecurity which possess Christian white people who are determined to hang on to their privileges and dominance.

White supremacists and nazis in Toronto today are building on a long history. In the 1930s, they formed Swastika clubs and fought with Jewish youth in the streets. In the 1950s the Canadian Nazi Party came together to revive the fascist movement. Even in the flower-power days of 60s and 70s, neo-nazis were active in the Western Guard, attacking African, Jewish and leftist communities. This leaflet describes the key players in the fascist scene in the Toronto today — groups and individuals who are organizing on all levels to promote hatred and violence.

Who are the Nazis in Our Neighbourhood?

The Heritage Front is a Nazi Front!

In 1989 Wolfgang Droege was released from prison in the United States. He had been jailed for drug trafficking, and for his role in a failed attempt by a gang of white supremacist mercenaries to militarily conquer the Caribbean island of Dominica, in order to set up an international fascist base of operations. On returning to Canada, where he'd been active in the past with the Western Guard and the KKK, he made contact with other white supremacists such as Gerry Lincoln, James Scott Dawson and Grant Bristow, and established the Heritage Front.

The Heritage Front made a bid for mainstream credibility, soft-peddalling their hate and promoting themselves as an "equal rights for whites" group. The group established a phone line which plays racist, anti-semitic, homophobic and paranoid anti-communist messages, and serves as a major recruitment tool for the group. Literally a "front group" for racists and anti-semites of all stripes, the group had the support of such notorious racists as Paul Fromm, leader of the anti-immigrant Canadians for Foreign

Aid Reform (C-FAR), international nazi propagandist and financier Ernst Zundel, Canadian

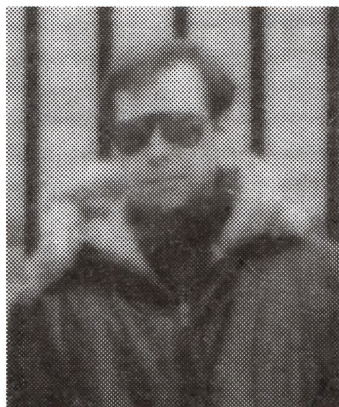
Nazi Party and Aryan Nations bigwig John Ross Taylor (now expired), and various Odinists (followers of a manufactured white supremacist "Nordic" religion). The cultlike paramilitary Church of the Creator (COTC), an international organization based in Wisconsin, provided the muscle for the group. But the Front especially targeted young people for recruitment in high schools and on the streets.

The Heritage Front is still active in 1995, main-

taining its phone line and magazine "Up Front", edited by Gerry Lincoln. However, it has lost some key supporters after three tough years, beginning with complaints about the hotline messages laid with the Ontario Human Rights Commission by the Native Canadian Centre. When the Front attempted to march in protest on the courthouse



Wolfgang Walter Droege



Gary Schipper

through the streets of Toronto in May 1992, anti-racist youth met them in force for the first of several courthouse confrontations. By September, these anti-racists had organized themselves as Anti-Racist Action in order to confront the fascist threat on the streets, and also in the schools, the bars, and other hangouts for young people.

By June 1993, the violent side of the Front had come out into the open. Nazi skinheads (or "boneheads") affiliated with the Front were responsible for two arson attacks on the home of a Jewish woman activist in Kitchener, as well as an arson attempt at a women's shelter in Toronto and attacks on shelter staff. A Black community activist was assaulted by several boneheads in Toronto. In Ottawa, boneheads went on

a rampage through the streets after a Heritage Front "Rock for Racism" concert, putting street people and anti-racists in the hospital with broken bones. Arrested for breaking one woman's nose was prominent Front member George Burdi, the leader of the COTC. Soon after, three other COTC members were busted in Toronto for kidnapping and beating up a Front member suspected of ratting on the group. Two of those charged, Eric and Elkar Fischer, were former members of the

Canadian Airborne Regiment (surprise, surprise).

Among the most serious attacks was a brutal assault on Sivarajah Vinisathamby in June 1993, by a bonehead coming home from a Heritage Front concert.

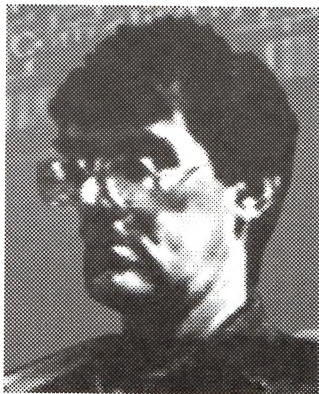
Vinisathamby remains partially paralyzed, while his attacker, Jason Hoolans, was sentenced to just four years in prison. Within a week of this attack, Droege was also arrested and charged with aggravated assault for breaking the jaw of an anti-racist.

This was the beginning of the end of the Heritage Front as an effective "front group" for the white supremacist movement, but there was more pressure on the way



"Upfront"

Magazine of the Heritage Front



Gerald Lincoln

— from the inside. First came the defection of key youth recruiter Elisse Hategan. Her testimony helped convict Droege of contempt of court for setting up a second telephone hateline while the Heritage Front line was being investigated, along with Ken Barker and Hateline voice Gary Schipper.

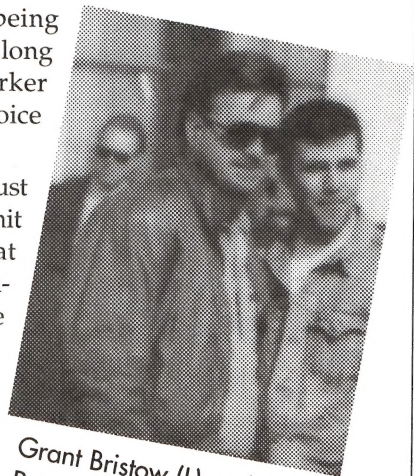
Then in August 1994 a story hit the press that seemed to confirm some "paranoid" conspiracy theories: the Front's Number 2 man, Grant

Bristow, had been

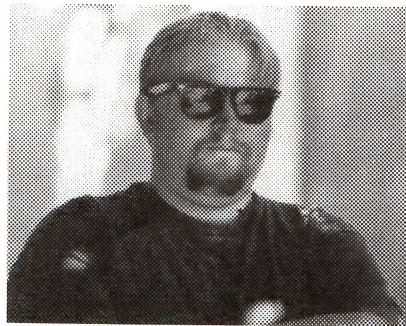
an agent with the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service since 1989! A parliamentary committee confirmed that Bristow had been involved in harassment campaigns of anti-racists, and had collected information on the Front's anti-fascist opponents.

The combination of anti-fascist resistance on all levels, pressure from more mainstream anti-racist organizations, and increased community awareness, has forced the Front to

stop open fascist organizing for now. We've entered a new phase, as many supporters have splintered off and re-organized into the groups that anti-racists face in 1995.



Grant Bristow (L) and Peter Mitrevski

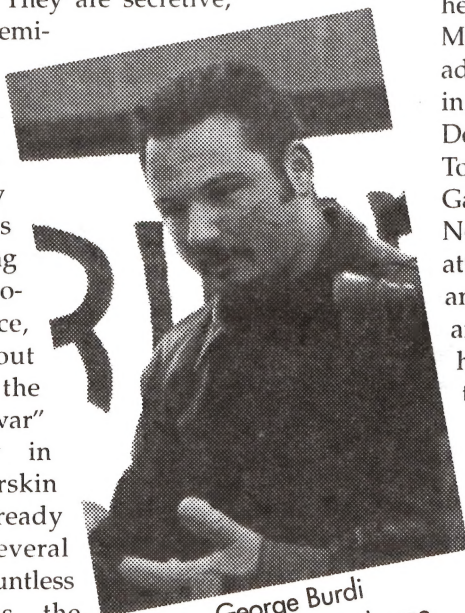


James Scott Dawson

White Power KKKulture: "Musi

Young boneheads who were tired of the Heritage Front's "moderate" approach have teamed up with the remnants of the COTC to form the Northern Hammerskins. There are Hammerskin chapters in cities across North America, connected to European and Australian groups as well. They are secretive, media-shy and semi-underground, more like a gang than a political organization. They make no bones about advocating racist and homophobic violence, and brag about preparing for the coming "race war" — supposedly in 1995. Hammerskin goons have already committed several murders and countless beatings across the continent.

In Toronto, the Northern Hammerskins have been active in recruiting and building their base. NHS graffiti is visible all over the TTC, and boneheads are wearing their patches (the crossed hammers symbol). Their organizing hasn't gone smoothly! A celebration of Hitler's birthday in April 1994 ended with a whimper when police kicked them out of their venue, the Latvian Hall (site of many Heritage Front meetings and other racist events). An Aryan Fest party on a farm in Caledon, ended in disaster after a fight broke out sending three boneheads to the hospital.

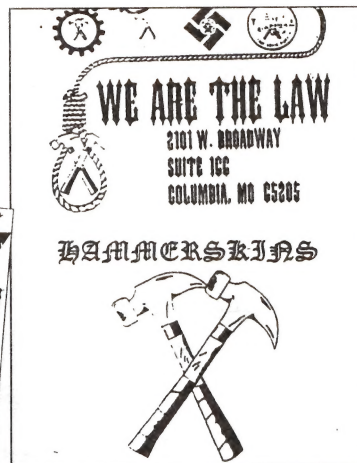


George Burdi
aka Rev. Eric Hawthorne

(Funny, the media didn't run any story about "white on white" violence after this fiasco!) Nevertheless, they continue to hold smaller-scale basement drinking parties, featuring fascist bands like Toronto's own White Riot.

Racist rock is the main organizing tool for bonehead groupings like the Northern Hammerskins. Many Hammerskin chapters share mailing addresses with the local bands, like *Bound for Glory* in Minneapolis, *Max Resist* and the *Hooligans* in Detroit, *Odin's Law* in Vancouver, and *White Riot* in Toronto. *White Riot* is led by Hammerskin Andre Gallant, former lead singer for another racist band, *Negative Response* (himself implicated in the attacks on the Youthlink shelter). These bands give an excuse for boneheads to get together and drink, and whip up the crowd into a often racist and homophobic frenzy. Attacks are committed after these gigs.

An up-and-coming master of ceremonies in the racist rock scene is George Burdi, former head of the Canadian COTC. With the collapse of the North American COTC, Burdi

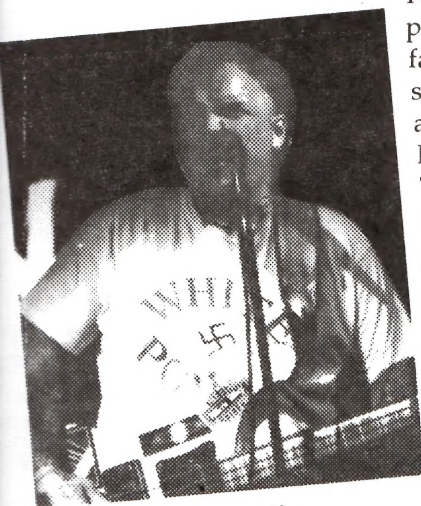


"We Are The Law"
Northern Hammerskin paper

c", fashion, and street violence

invested big bucks in his own cottage industry, a record label called Resistance Records. Based in Detroit (to take advantage of liberal American free speech laws), Resistance Records sees itself as a unifying force in the international white power youth movement. Its glossy magazine RESISTANCE covers white supremacist news and views, and promotes the dozen or so bands recorded on the label, including *Aryan* (based in Woodstock, Ontario) and Burdi's own band *RaHoWa* (*Racial Holy War*), which has played several Heritage Front events in Toronto.

Resistance Records met with a bit of resistance themselves when they tried to organize the racist rock concert "of the century" in rural Wisconsin in September 1994. Not only did the event draw far fewer wanna-be stormtroopers than expected, but an argument in a convenience store ended with Nordic Thunder "singer" Joe Rowan winning a free trip to Valhalla when he got his empty head blown off by a Black youth offended by the bone-head presence.



Dave Griffin
lead singer for "Aryan"

Two other major players in the fascist street scene are Alaric and Roderik Peer Jackson. Together, they ran a chain of trendy clothing boutiques called IXL ("I excel"?). These stores served as nazi hang-outs, make-work projects for Alaric's fascist bone-head buddies,

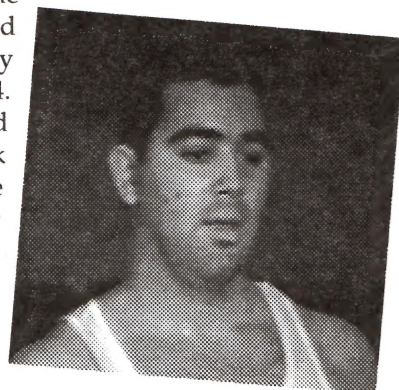
including the NHS's ill-fated Hitler's Birthday party in April 94. Nazi regalia and racist rock albums were also sold under the counter, with the profits going back into the movement.

Alaric himself was a bone-head organiz-

er in Montreal, based in an IXL store there, before he was chased out by anti-fascists in the late 1980s. ARA began a campaign against the IXL stores in the summer of 1994, and by January 1995 the Queen Street store had been sold to an Asian-owned business. The Yonge Street store, at 535 Yonge, south of Wellesley, remains open for business (open season?) at the time of writing.

All of these groups and individuals are part of the racist youth movement in Toronto, and are directly linked to street violence and hate crimes against people of colour, Jewish people, queers and leftists. In the fall of 1994, several leftists distributing leaflets against the Reform Party were attacked on a Saturday afternoon at Pape and Danforth by boneheads shouting "the east end belongs to us"; one man's face was slashed with an x-acto knife. In the weeks that followed, an anti-fascist youth associated with the leafletters was stalked and attacked by the same boneheads. Later in the fall, a gay man was bashed by nazi skinheads in the heart of the queer neighbourhood of Church and Wellesley.

The results of racist high school organizing were felt in November at Humberside Collegiate. The school had been targeted by various fascist groups for leafletting and propaganda, and several nazi skinheads were active in intimidating other stu-



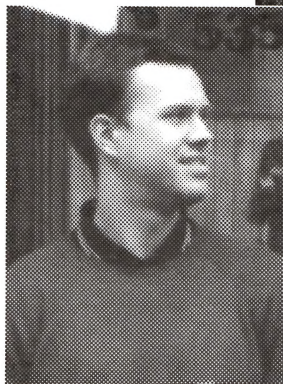
Andre Gallant

and as meeting points for nazi gatherings,

dents. A week after teachers of colour received racist hate mail, a South Asian teacher was pushed down a flight of stairs by two white men, knocking him unconscious.

Fascism aims to rule by violence and terror, most blatantly reflected by the street presence nazi boneheads attempt to seize through force and intimidation.

The "counter-culture" of white supremacist rock bands and fashion has been deliberately created



Alaric Jackson

to rope in alienated white youth, to act as the bait leading them deeper into the fascist fold. Young



Nazi reflex on Yonge Street

people are recruited to keep the fascist movement alive, and to keep the old nazi leaders out of jail by doing their dirty work for them.

The link between

older nazis and their younger skinhead stormtroopers has been described as a "match made in racist heaven".

Don "Decrepit" Andrews

The first racist organizer in Toronto who saw the potential in recruiting boneheads was Don "Decrepit" Andrews. One-time health inspector, past leader of the Western Guard, head honcho of the Nationalist Party and slumlord, Don maintains his loyal following by putting up his young recruits in several rooming houses in the city. Andrews and Wolfgang Droege are long-time on and off buddies, and the Heritage Front eclipsed the Nationalist Party for some time, but Don remains obsessed with dropping his calling cards throughout southern Ontario and Quebec, for example at Humberstone Collegiate after the racist attack.

In the fall of 1994 the wanna-be fuhrer tried to make a come-back by advertising a "European Heritage Week". Full-colour posters distributed throughout Toronto consisted of a collage of images, including depictions of slave ships and witch-burnings, and portraits of Hitler, Mussolini — and Don himself. City councils in Victoria, Edmonton, and St. Catharines endorsed the

Week, as did the Queen of England, before being informed of its fascist origin by the Toronto Mayor's Committee on Race Relations. Don has responded by filing suit against the Mayor's Committee, for \$33 million in damages (to his ego). The Nationalist Party, together with the Heritage Front, also ran several candidates in Toronto municipal elections in November 1994.

While his commitment to the racist movement can't be denied, one can expect that because of his autocratic leadership style the Nationalist Party will die when he does. His appearance suggests that may well be soon.

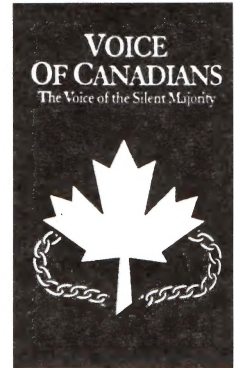


Don Andrews

Voice of Canadians: "Stole it all and still want more"

While the kids engage themselves in bone-head hooliganism, the parental generation is scared shitless of any threat to their stability, order, and privileges. Bridging the gap between the open fascism of the Heritage Front and the populist racism of the Reform Party is the Voice of Canadians Committee, a.k.a. the "Unhyphenated Canadians". Their public activities have included a deputation to the Mayor's Committee on Race Relations in the company of Heritage Front members, begging to scrap all multicultural programs. They were prominent at the horrifying pro-police rally held in October of 1994 in support of chief swine Bill McCormack's attempt to declare himself all-powerful, and have actively lobbied for the abolition of all civilian bodies which work to make the police accountable, even at the most minimal level. More generally, they have lobbied against immigration from the Third World, for the abolition of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and of all human rights commissions.

What is most terrifying about this bunch is the support they have received from the mainstream racist right, such as Christie Blatchford of the Toronto Sun. Together with C-COPS (Concerned Citizens for Order, Peace, and Security, another group of apologists for racist police violence) and CURE (Citizens United for Responsible Education, a viciously homophobic and anti-sex group of Christian fundamentalist creeps), the Voice of Canadians Committee represents the broad popular base for fascism. Speaking for the most reactionary elements of the white working and middle classes, they attack any existing institutional protection for all the systemically excluded groups and communities traditionally targeted by the extreme right. This can only help to create the political climate where more open fascists can operate completely unhindered.



Sugar-coated hate

Ernst Zundel — Guru of Hate

In addition to the many local groups which form and fall apart, Toronto is home to a key player in the international nazi movement, Ernst Zundel. Zundel immigrated to Canada from Germany in 1958 and eventually settled in Toronto at 206 Carlton (also known as the condom house), which he has turned into a virtual fortress. From his hatequarters Zundel runs Samisdat Publishing, one of the largest nazi propaganda operations in the world. Author and distributor of pamphlets



Ernst Zundel

like "The Hitler We Loved And Why" and "Did Six Million Really Die?", Zundel also produces shortwave radio and satellite TV shows for broadcast throughout Europe and in North America. He is especially important in Germany, where it is harder to obtain illegal fascist publications. Fascists there credit him for the revival of nazi movements, which has resulted in the worst xenophobic violence in Europe since the Second World War.

Zundel's main obsession is denying the Holocaust — in order to clear the ground for

broad acceptance of fascist ideology. He describes himself as a "truthmonger", a "white civil rights activist" and even "the white Martin Luther King"! His crucial role was minimized by the Canadian courts, which dismissed Holocaust-denial charges against him, describing the case as an "ethnic conflict between

Germans and Jews". Since his victory in the courts, fascists around the world have seen him as an invincible hero. In Toronto, Zundel openly associates with groups such as the Heritage Front and surrounds himself with violent boneheads who sometimes cry for "six million more".

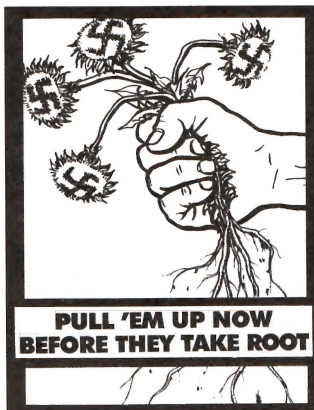
It is often tempting to ignore nazi organizing and violence. It is sometimes easier to see them as losers, cranks or isolated extremists rather than face the larger problems of widespread racism, homophobia, and anti-Semitism in society. But if we are to learn anything from history, it is that fascism is not a movement to be ignored as irrelevant.

Recent experiences in Germany, where organized gangs of nazis regularly carry out vicious attacks — including arson and murder — against immigrants and refugees, Jews and anti-racists, has demonstrated the violent agenda and goals of their movement. The German government's move to punish the victims of these attacks by tightening immigration and refugee laws (!) demonstrates the power of the organized far-right to force governments to cave in to their fascist agenda. It also shows the limits of looking to government and police for solutions to the problem.

Unlike in Europe, the Canadian far right has neither the numbers nor power to influence

government policy, but neither did the European far-right a decade ago. And even though their numbers are now small, nazis pose a physical threat, and often succeed in creating a climate of fear that is itself harmful. These organized racist scum are only the tip of the iceberg. From the colonization and theft of the Americas and ongoing genocide of First Nations peoples, to the kidnapping of African peoples, white people have managed to steal more privilege for themselves than any other people on the face of the Earth. If we choose to ignore the growth of fascism in this country — and choose not to challenge the everyday racism, sexism, homophobia and anti-Semitism which we encounter in our own lives — then we allow the grounds for fascist movements to remain fertile, and they will grow accordingly.

If we choose to act against racism and prejudice — in our schools, in our families, among our friends, and on the streets — then we can pull up the weeds before they spread...



GET INFORMED ... GET INVOLVED!

WHO IS ANTI-RACIST ACTION?

ARA came together in September 1992 to bring people together to show the strength of our opposition to fascism, as well as our commitment to a multi-racial, multi-cultural, sexually diverse, liberated and fun society. ARA is an open group. Our meetings are wheelchair accessible and childcare is provided on request.

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